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## **CIVIL SERVICE FACT SHEET**

### **Who is covered currently under Civil Service and who is impacted if the Town opts out of Civil Service?**

- Belmont Police (Patrol and Superiors) and Belmont Fire Fighters
- Only **New Hires** or those seeking promotion will be impacted, existing employees will remain in Civil Service

### **What is Civil Service?**

- Civil Service is part of the Massachusetts Human Resources Division (HRD).
- Civil Service handles the entrance testing of job applicants and testing of employees seeking promotion.
- Tests are statewide, and offer no focus on community specific needs/issues.
- Civil Service also handles appeals from employees who have been disciplined or bypassed for promotion, and from applicants who have been bypassed for employment.

### **History of Civil Service**

- The primary purpose of Civil Service when enacted in 1884 was to protect hiring and discipline from patronage and political interference.
- Collective bargaining agreements, Massachusetts General Laws and comprehensive policies, which did not exist in 1915 when the Annual Town Meeting adopted Civil Service, similarly provide protections to employees.
- Civil Service treats Police Officers and Firefighters as an “entry Level job.” Minimum entrance standards are a high school diploma/GED and a valid Massachusetts Driver’s License. Minimum qualification for promotion is one year in the previous rank.
- There are minimum and maximum age requirements to qualify for the entrance exam. The minimum age for the police and fire exam is 19; the maximum age is 31.

### **Challenges of Civil Service**

- Entrance exams are held only every two years.
- Candidates are chosen for interview based on the order of the list (highest test score down to lowest test score). The Appointing Authority must choose from the candidate scoring highest on the certification list. If not there is a tremendous burden to reach a better qualified candidate who may appear lower by only a point.
- If no employees take the exam or not enough take the exam then no promotion list is created and there is no option to hire outside of civil service.
- There were several years when no officers passed or not enough officers signed up to take promotional exams at the police department.

### **Benefits of Removal from Civil Service**

- There are **multiple** financial benefits to the Town by removing the provision of Civil Service; use of overtime, length of vacancies, academy training, etc.
- Attributes beyond a sole multi-choice test score such as work product, community contributions, performance evaluations would factor into promotions.
- The Town can set their own minimum eligibility guidelines (i.e., education) and have a more diverse pool of candidates.
- Maximum age requirement goes away, opening the door for candidates with significant and varied life and career experience seeking a second career.
- The Town would not be required to hire from an existing lay off list
- The Town can determine its own hiring preferences (i.e., residency, military experience, certifications (EMT, paramedic), language proficiency, academy training, etc.)
- The Town could recruit from local colleges and universities from the Fire Science and Criminal Justice programs.
- The Town could recruit lateral transfers from other communities
- A probationary period could be instituted for promotions.
- A more comprehensive exam could be conducted by private sector companies who specialize in this type of testing at little to no cost to the town.
- Exams could be tailored to Belmont, and focus on community specific questions.